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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 CAIRO 002166

SIPDIS

NSC FOR AGUIRRE

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SUBJECT: EGYPT: NDP READY TO RUN ON A "FOR YOU" PLATFORM REF: 2008 CAIRO 2310 Classified By: Minister-Counselor for Economic and Political Affairs

- 1.(C) Key Points: -- As promised, the National Democratic Party's sixth annual conference focused on economic and social development including
- 2.(C) Comment: Some members of the NDP see the conference as evidence of the success of the party's own "internal democratization," the result
- 3.(C) In its sixth annual conference held in Cairo October 31 to November 2, the National Democratic Party (NDP), set out its platform for the
- 4.(C) Throughout the conference, party leaders and government officials blurred the lines between the NDP party platform and the accomplishment
- 5.(C) As advertized, the focus of the conference was economic development, poverty alleviation and social reform. There was little mention of
- 6.(C) Several speakers claimed the NDP was open to the idea of a strong opposition. However, speakers just as often expressed concern that Egypt
- 7.(C) Little reference was made to the 2011 presidential elections during the conference. Party support for Gamal's presidential aspirations was
- 8.(C) As chief symbol of the party's "old guard," NDP Secretary General Safwat Sherif kicked off the conference with a distinctive nationalist
- 9.(C) As President of the NDP President Mubarak spoke about Egypt's role in the world as well as the NDP's focus on "reform" and its continued
- 10.(C) While Gamal Mubarak openly rejected a split between the "old guard" and the "new guard" in his speech, differences of style were noticeable
- 11.(C) The reaction to Gamal from NDP rank and file was distinctly positive, with a rush to greet him as he entered the hall on the first morning
- 12.(C) Gamal's formal remarks focused on election preparations and reform efforts while acknowledging past challenges. He spoke of the NDP's in
- 13.(C) In the most rough and tumble speech of a fairly polished conference, Ahmed Ezz played the role of party rabble-rouser. In a mix of prepared
- 14.(C) The conference venue was open to the media despite tight security that included a prohibition on cell phones. Several TV "studios" were